

Saturday Magazine.

No. 556.

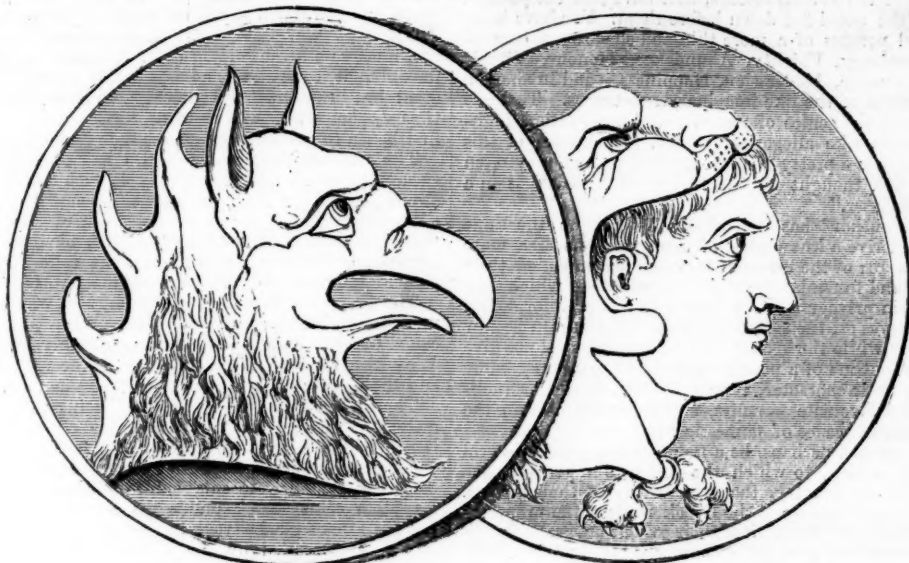
SUPPLEMENT,

FEBRUARY, 1841.

PRICE
ONE PENNY.



SOME ACCOUNT OF COINS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.



MEDALLION COMMEMORATING THE VICTORY OF HERCULES OVER THE HARPIES.

(From the Earl of Pembroke's Collection.)

THE Medal, faithful to its charge of fame,
Through climes and ages, bears each form and name;
In one short view subjected to our eye,
Gods, Emperors, Heroes, Sages, Beauties lie.—POPE.

INTRODUCTION.

A PROLONGED attention to the study of antiquarian objects generally affords a theme for laughter and derision, to those who expect palpably beneficial results from every intellectual exertion. A long-continued study of one object or set of objects prejudices the mind in favour of it, causes the student to speak with enthusiasm on his favourite subject, and disposes him to undervalue other mental employments. Hence, the popular estimate of the value of a pursuit being often founded on the exhibition of excess on the part of its votaries, is naturally mixed up with ridicule; and no subject perhaps is so open to the attacks of the satirist as antiquities:—their real value can only be appreciated by considerable study; and as they do not appear to offer any immediate relation to the happiness or convenience of mankind, they are disregarded: but the historian, the architect, the artist, the man of literature, and the man of taste, all derive inestimable advantages from the records of past ages; and, by a faithful interpretation of them, these advantages are given to the world: so that our conduct for the future may be to a certain extent guided by the experience of the past.

We have thought it necessary to preface our account of ANCIENT AND MODERN COINS with this apology, in order to predispose the Reader in favour of a really useful subject. In our motto, the Poet expresses, in his usual concise language, some of the uses of coins; we shall endeavour to avoid the abuse of them which called forth the censure from the same satiric pen:—

With sharpened sight pale antiquaries pore,
The inscription value, but the rust adore:
This, the blue varnish, that, the green endears,
The sacred rust of twice ten hundred years.
To gain Pescennius one employs his schemes;
One grasps a Cærops in ecstatic dreams;
Poor Vadius, long with learned spleen devoured,
Can taste no pleasure since his shield was scoured.

When a person is looking over a collection of coins, he frequently expresses surprise at their comparative values,
VOL. XVIII.

which, judging from his every day use of money, appear often to have no sort of relation to the modern system of exchanges:—a silver coin is often of more value than one of gold; and a brass coin fetches perhaps a higher price than either. The difficulty, however, disappears as soon as we begin to look upon a cabinet of medals, not as a treasure of money, but one of knowledge; and not for charms in the gold, but in the figures and inscriptions which adorn it. Thus, Addison well remarks:—"The intrinsic value of an old coin does not consist in its metal, but in its erudition; it is the device that has raised the species; so that at present an *as* or an *obolus* may carry a higher price than a *denarius* or a *drachma*; and a piece of money that was not worth a penny fifteen hundred years ago, may be now rated at fifty crowns, or perhaps a hundred guineas."

So anxious have many antiquarian writers been, to state in the fullest possible terms the usefulness of the study of ancient coins, that it becomes a matter of some difficulty to select those more obvious aids to history and art, which this study has supplied. Addison, however, in his pleasant dialogue on the subject makes one of his characters express himself in terms sufficiently concise for quotation; so that we select the passage. The uses of old coins are inquired after; when Philander says:—"The first and most obvious one, is the showing us the faces of all the great persons of antiquity. A cabinet of medals is a collection of pictures in miniature. Juvenal calls them very humorously

Concisum argentum in titulos, faciesque minutas.

"You here see the Alexanders, Cæsars, Pompeys, Trajans, and the whole catalogue of heroes; who have many of them so distinguished themselves from the rest of mankind, that we almost look upon them as another species. It is an agreeable amusement to compare in our own thoughts the face of a great man with the character that authors have given us of him, and to try if we can find out in his looks and features either the haughty, cruel, or merciful temper, that discovers itself in the history of his actions. We find, too, on medals the representations of ladies that have given occasion to whole volumes, on account only of a face. We have here the pleasure to examine their looks and dresses, and survey

• Silver stamped with titles and miniature portraits.

at leisure those beauties that have sometimes been the happiness, or the misery, of whole kingdoms. Nor do you only meet the faces of such as are famous in history, but of several whose names are not to be found anywhere except on medals. Some of the emperors, for example, have had wives, and some of them children, that no authors have mentioned. We are, therefore, obliged to the study of coins for having made new discoveries to the learned, and given them information of such persons as are to be met with on no other kind of records." . . . "You have on medals a long list of heathen deities, distinguished from each other by their proper titles and ornaments. You see the copies of the several statues, that have had the politest nations of the world fall down before them. You have here, too, several persons of a more thin and shadowy nature, as Hope, Constancy, Fidelity, Abundance, Honour, Virtue, Eternity, Justice, Moderation, Happiness,—and in short, a whole creation of the like imaginary substances. To these you may add the genies of nations, provinces, cities, highways, and the like allegorical beings. In devices of this nature one sees a pretty poetical invention, and may often find as much thought on the reverse of a medal, as in a canto of Spenser."

Another author* has well observed,—“From the same source we derive a knowledge of many customs of a more private nature: of the ceremonies which accompanied their marriages and funerals: of the various sacrifices which they performed in privacy and retirement: a sort of information which deserves all the attention the antiquarian can bestow upon it: for while the greater and more public customs give the general outline of a people, these point out many nicer features in their character, represent their particular inclinations and favourite pursuits, and transport us into the most delightful scenes of domestic life.

“There cannot, perhaps, be a more certain test of the real state of perfection, to which the fine arts in general have advanced in any country, than the beauty of their medals. The unrivalled elegance of the Greek medals, the propriety of their design, and the spirit of their execution, are sufficient to convince us that, amongst a people who could produce such perfect models in a particular art, every other ornamental art must have flourished in the highest splendour: nor shall we hesitate to pronounce, upon comparing the medals of Rome with those of her provinces that the arts of the capital had not extended their influence to every part of that vast empire.

“The medals of the Greek cities preserve some faint traces of Grecian jurisprudence as well in the public decrees and conventions, as in the private ordinances which they record. To the civil institutes of the Romans their medals are the most certain guides: for every law which the interest of private families procured for the people, for every decree of an emperor, which was calculated to promote the welfare of the empire, the senate adopted this as the best mode of expressing their gratitude, and delivering the remembrance of it to future ages. The study of the civil law, therefore, has always been found to have a great connection with the study of medals, and to receive illustration from them in many of its most abstruse parts.”

SECTION I.

MEDALS AND COINS DISTINGUISHED—METALS OF WHICH THEY ARE MADE—PECULIARITIES OF COINING—SIZES—PARTS OF A MEDAL—SUBJECTS OF MEDALS—PORTRAITS—REVERSES OF MEDALS—REMARKABLE COINS—TITLES ON COINS AND MEDALS.

By the term *medal* we are to understand a piece of metal in form of a *coin*, designed to preserve to posterity the portrait of some great man, or the memory of some illustrious action. Coins in the ordinary intercourse of life, serve the purposes of exchange, and are the representatives of value. When they cease to serve this office, and are still treasured up, they come under the denomination of *medals*; so that, in this paper, the two terms, COINS and MEDALS, will be treated of synonymously, unless otherwise specified.

The metals of which medals and coins have been in all times ordinarily made, are gold, silver, and copper: under this last head, are included all the *brass* coins which have come down to our times, as well as those of copper. Other substances have been used by different nations, for money; such as leather, wood, shells, beads, &c., but with these we have nothing to do.

In order to estimate the fineness and purity of gold, the

* HALL, *Oxford Prize Essay on Medals.*

pound Troy is considered to be divided into twenty-four parts, called *carats*, and each carat into four *grains*.

The most ancient gold coins, which are those of Lydia, and other states in Asia Minor, are not of the purest gold. Some of the very ancient coins are formed of a compound of gold and silver, called *electrum*; one part gold, and four silver. But very fine gold coins began to be formed B.C. 350, by Philip, King of Macedon; from the gold obtained from the mines of Philippi, in Thrace. The coins of Alexander and of succeeding princes are also beautiful specimens of ancient coinage; those of the Ptolemies of Egypt are twenty-three carats, three grains fine; or only $\frac{1}{12}$ part alloy! The Roman gold coinage is very pure from the earliest times, and continued so till the reign of Severus, A.D. 211. The proportion of alloy, that is, an inferior metal, such as copper, mixed with the gold, in order to harden it, was various in different countries, and has varied much in different ages: but in general, the ancient gold coins had not more than $\frac{1}{12}$ part alloy. The Romans, however, in the later ages first began to considerably debase the precious metals.

The most ancient silver was also less pure than that of succeeding times, and particularly so with the Greeks. The Roman silver was likewise inferior to ours; and very bad silver began to be put out in the reign of Severus. It is thought that the silver coins of Ægina, having on one side a turtle, or tortoise, and showing the rude marks of the coiner's blows on the other, are the most ancient known.

The brass of the ancients, when good, which is rather uncommon, consisted of two sorts; the red, or what they called *Cyprian* brass,—i.e. copper; and the yellow, or brass. With the Romans, brass was double the value of copper; and the Greeks probably followed the same rule.

The ancients had also numerous coins made of mixed metals. The first sort was that of the *electrum*, just mentioned. The next were those of *Corinthian* brass, which depended upon certain qualities or proportions in which the copper and zinc were mingled to produce the brass. Of Egyptian coins struck under the Roman emperors, some were at first of good silver; but by degrees they degenerated into a metal called by the French *potin*,—a mixture of copper and tin with a little silver. Some coins were made of what is now called *pot-metal*, or *bell-metal*. A coinage of brass mixed with silver was authorised by the Roman state about A.D. 260. The coins spoken of by some writers, of lead or copper, plated with gold or silver, are supposed to have resulted from Roman forgery; but leaden coins have been found of undoubted antiquity. An ancient writer informs us that *tin* money was issued by Dionysius, one of the Sicilian tyrants; but no such coins have been discovered, though medals of lead have been found of the imperial sort; but these are chiefly trial-pieces, to enable the artist to judge of the progress of the die. Lastly, some medals were composed of two different metals, not by melting them together, but either by plating over brass or iron with silver, or by laying a rim of a different metal round the edge of a medal: the former was a sort of false money, which had its origin during the triumvirate of Augustus.

None of the ancient money was cast in moulds, except the most ancient and very large Roman brass, commonly called *weights*; neither did the ancients impress legends on the edges of their money, as often done on modern coins, particularly on the crown and half-crown pieces of the last century; but some of their pieces are found *crenated*, i.e. notched round the edges. This is the case with some of the Syrian coins, with some of the Roman consular, and a few other early ones: the chief object of it was to prevent forgery.

Medals may likewise be distinguished by their *sizes*. The sizes of ancient medals are from three inches to a quarter of an inch in diameter. Those of the largest size are commonly called *medallions*. The others are usually ranked into *large*, *middle*, and *small*; and the class is determined not so much by the breadth and thickness of the medal itself, as by the size of the head that is stamped upon it. The shape of medals is rather elliptical, or not perfectly round. The first regular Greek coins were small pieces of silver, while the Roman were large masses of copper: the former were struck, the latter cast in moulds. The frontispiece shows a medalion belonging to the heavy brass species. It cannot be later than the time of Servius Tullius, who governed Rome about 550 B.C. This king coined nothing but brass. The piece in question is of the actual size represented in our cut, and weighs nineteen ounces and three quarters. It was probably cast in a mould.

The subject of it is HERCULES AND THE HARPY. This

hero is held out by the ancients as a true pattern of virtue and piety; and as his whole life was employed for the common benefit of mankind, we need not be surprised that his effigy should be found upon coins and medals. He seems to have flourished about 1230 years B.C. The twelve labours of Hercules are well known in Profane History. His sixth labour seems to have consisted in ridding the neighbourhood of the lake Stymphalus, in Arcadia, where was a town of the same name, of a number of voracious birds, like cranes or storks, which fed upon human flesh. The poets frequently represent them as winged monsters, having the face of a woman, with the body of a vulture, and their feet and fingers armed with sharp claws.

The medallion at the head of our paper is evidently intended to commemorate the victory of Hercules over these beings. On the one side is Hercules clothed (as usual) with the skin of the Nemean lion,—the result of his first labour. On the other side is a Harpy. It has been well remarked that Harpies are for the most part badly represented by the similitude of cherubs, with a full and young human face. According to Collins's *Dictionary*, "they are feigned to be fowls with a virgin's face, and bear's ears, their bodies like vultures, and their hands like their crooked talons." Our medallion marks the harpy as a *fowl*;—it gives the beak of the *vulture*—the *human eye*—the *ears of the bear*—and on the breast, the *shaggy feathering* of the large bird. The picked points upon the nape of the neck seem to denote somewhat of a low-seated crest*.

The *parts* of a medal are the two sides, of which one is called the *face*, *head*, or *obverse*; the other is termed the *reverse*. On each side is the *area*, or *field*, which is the middle of a medal; the *rim*, or *border*; and the *exergue*, which is beneath the ground whereon the figures represented are placed. On each of the two sides are distinguished the *type*, and the *legend* or *inscription*. The *type*, or *device*, is the figure represented; the *legend* is the writing, especially that around the medal; though in the Greek medals this writing is frequently in the area, and is called the *inscription*.

That which is in the exergue is often no more than some initial letters, the meaning of which is not always very plain: but it most usually contains either the date of the coin, *i.e.*, in what consulship of the emperor it was struck, if a Roman coin, and sometimes it signifies the place where it was struck, and to which the coin properly belonged; at other times, perhaps the name of a province is impressed, the reduction of which the medal is designed to celebrate.

On the faces of medals are commonly the portraits of great and illustrious persons; usually, but not always in profile. The coins of the Macedonian kings are the most ancient of any yet known, on which portraits are found; and Alexander I., who lived about 480 B.C., is the earliest monarch whose medals have been discovered. Then follow the kings and queens who reigned in Cyprus, Sicily, &c.; then the series of the kings of Egypt, Syria, &c., which extends from the time of Alexander the Great to the birth of Christ, including a period of about 330 years. The last series of ancient kings descends to the fourth century of the Christian era. The portraits on all these series of medals are accompanied with Greek writing.

There is a very perfect series of medals of the Roman emperors from Julius Cæsar, the first, to the destruction of Rome by the Goths; or even to a much later period, if the coins after this were not so rude as to destroy the beauty of the series, though they enhance its completeness. Till the third century after Christ, the faces on Roman medals were represented in profile. After this, for some time, we see Gothic front faces filling the whole field of medals.

The kings upon Greek coins have generally the diadem without any other ornament. The side face is always presented; though upon very ancient Greek coins of cities, and Roman consular coins, full faces are found of amazing relief and expression. Sometimes several heads are found on the same coin, either impressed on both sides, or only upon one. Sometimes two or more heads are found upon one side, while the other bears a reverse in the usual way: such heads are either *adverse*, that is, opposite to each other, face to face; or *joined*, both looking one way: of this latter sort are some of the finest Greek coins. Real portraits are sometimes found joined with ideal ones: such as, Carausius and Apollo, Posthumus and Hercules; Carausius and Posthumus being names of living characters, the others of fabulous

deities. Three heads are occasionally found on one side; but all such coins are very rare and valuable.

The chief ornament of medallion portraits is the diadem, called in Latin *vitta*. This was a riband worn about the head, and tied in a flowing knot behind; in ancient times the simple but expressive badge of regal power. It appears on the Greek medals of kings, from the earliest to the latest ages, and is a decided sign of the portrait of a prince. It occurs likewise, but seldom, on some Roman consular coins. The Romans having for ages an utter abhorrence of any thing which savoured of kingly distinction, their emperors ventured not for two centuries to assume the diadem, though they wore the radiated crown peculiar to the gods. But, in the time of Constantine, about A.D. 310, the diadem began to be worn, ornamented on either side with a row of pearls and various other decorations. The radiated crown



COIN OF ANTIOCHUS VI.

was first used as a token of deification in the posthumous coins of an emperor; but was soon put upon the emperors' heads, on their medals, during their life-time. The crown of laurel, the honourable distinction of conquerors, was afterwards worn, at least on the medals, by all the Roman emperors from Julius Cæsar. In later times, the laurel is held by a hand above the head, as a mark of piety. Besides the diadem, the Greek princes sometimes appear with the laurel crown. The Arsacide, or kings of Parthia, wear a kind of sash round the head, with their hair in rows of curls like a wig. Tigranes, and the kings of Armenia, wear the tiara. The successors of Alexander the Great assumed different symbols of deity on the busts of their medals. The helmet also appears on coins, as on those of Macedon under the Romans, which have Alexander's head sometimes covered with a helmet. It occurs also on some of the coins of Probus and Constantine: as also on a coin of Herod, king of Judea, which circumstance was considered as a mark of his pride and ambition.



JEWISH COIN.

The diadem also adorns the heads of the Greek queens. The queens of Egypt usually have the sceptre. The Roman empresses never appear with the diadem, the variety of their head-dresses compensating for the want of it; the minutest parts of which are often remarkable on their coins. The bust of an empress is sometimes supported by a crescent, which probably denoted that she was the moon as her husband was the sun, of the state. There are other symbolic ornaments of the head to be seen on some Roman coins; the principal of which is the *veil* used in the consecration of an emperor or empress: such coins are valuable for their rarity.



MEDAL OF NERO.

* We are indebted for this explanation to the Rev. E. Duke, of Lake House, near Salisbury, an eminent local antiquary.

The "glory," or circular line, in later times usually put upon the heads of saints, was in old times applied to emperors, and appears on some of their coins. The bust of a figure is the only part usually given on ancient coins; but sometimes half, or the whole, of the body; in which cases, the hands appear with some ensigns of majesty in them: such as the globe, said to have been introduced by Augustus, as expressing possession of the world; the sceptre, sometimes confounded with the consular staff; the roll of parchment, indicating legislative power; and the handkerchief, with which the emperor gave the signal at the public games. Some princes hold the thunderbolt, shewing that their power on earth was equal to that of Jupiter in heaven; others hold an image of Victory.

The reverses of medals contain figures of deities, at whole length, with their attributes and symbols; public buildings and diversions; allegorical representations; civil and religious ceremonies; important events; figures of statues; plants,



ALTARS ON ROMAN COINS.

animals, and other subjects of Natural History; magistrates with their insignia; and, in short, almost every object of nature and art. Some reverses bear the portrait of the queen, the son, or the daughter of the prince who appears on the obverse: such coins are particularly valuable, because they identify the personage on the reverse to have been the wife, son, or daughter, of a particular prince, and thus help to adjust a series. Some medals have a portrait on each side.

The ancient Athenian coins are remarkable for the coarseness of their engraving, and the figure of the owl on the reverse. The reverses of Roman coins have more art and design about them than the Greek; but those of the Greeks excel in relief and workmanship. In the most ancient coins no reverse is found, except a rude mark struck into the metal, as of an instrument with four blunt points, on which the coin was struck. Soon after, by degrees, there appears some little form of a dolphin, or other animal, inserted within the rude mark, or in a hollow square. Next follows, perhaps, a perfect reverse of a horse, or the like, and all the rude marks gradually disappear. Some of the Greek reverses are *in intaglio*, that is, sunk; not *in cameo*, that is, raised, or in relief. When complete reverses appear on the Greek coins, about 500 B.C., they are of exquisite relief, minute finish, and beauty. The very muscles of men and animals are seen, and will bear inspection with the largest magnifying glass.

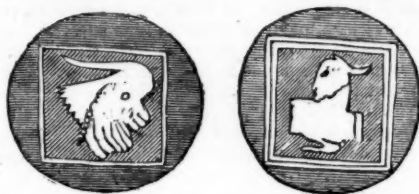
The subject of the reverses of Roman coins till about the year 100 A.C. was the prow of a ship, a car, or such like; but about this time various devices appear on their consular coins in all metals. The variety and beauty of the imperial Roman reverses are well known. Such as have a large number of figures within the area of the reverse, are much valued: there is a small gold coin, no larger than a sixpence, containing on the reverse the "Daughters of Faustina,"—twelve figures! There are others of a similar sort. Some also have small figures on both sides.

The figures of gods and goddesses on Roman coins, usually have their names, as well as their peculiar attributes; the names serving as a legend, when coupled with some expressive adjective, declaring the office or quality of the deity represented; but in the Greek coins, the name of the deity is not expressed, but left to the easy interpretation of fixed symbols. This remarkable difference is observable in the earliest coins of the two countries, on which only the bust of the deity is given. The Romans have almost always the name; while the Greeks are satisfied with affording to each deity its distinguishing symbol.

We now proceed to give an account of the symbols found on two remarkable coins, which are not immediately illustrated by a legend.

In the reign of Archelaus, King of Macedon, B.C. 340, there occurs on the reverse of a coin of that king, the head

of a goat, having only one horn. We have given two varieties of this coin. This sort of coins, having the square



MACEDONIAN COINS

spoken of before, is ancient; and containing the one-horned goat referred to in the Sacred Book of Daniel, which goat seems to have been a kind of crest of the Grecian king, wonderfully corroborates the course of Scripture prophecy.

The titles that are found on the faces of medals are usually titles of honour; as *Imperator* (Emperor), *Cæsar Augustus*, given to all the Roman emperors after Julius and



COIN OF ANTIOCH IN SYRIA, WITH THE HEAD OF AUGUSTUS.

Augustus. The title of *Dominus*, Lord, was first assumed by Aurelian, A.D. 270. Various other titles, epithets, and terms of dignity were assumed by the pride and ambition of the chief rulers of the Roman empire, until at last the terms *ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ* King, and *ΔΕΣΠΟΤΗΣ* Despot, are found as legends upon their coins. Other titles are the names of officers; as *COS.* for *consul*, with a number annexed to it, signifying how many times the person had been thus elected. *TRIB. POT.* the year of his *tribunitial authority*, the number being added to the preceding words. *P.M.* denotes the office of *Pontifex Maximus*, or high priest: this title was taken by the emperors, and expressed among their other titles, from Augustus to Constantine.

On the reverses of the large early copper coins there is only the word *ROMA*. Afterwards, on the reverses of what are called "consular coins," occur the peculiar designations of public officers; while the obverse bears the head of a deity, generally without a legend. In time, the magistrates put the head of some illustrious ancestor on the coins, with his name. Cæsar, when made Perpetual Dictator, was the first Roman who put his own head on his coins, with the legend of names and titles on the obverse, and not on the reverse, as before. Before this time the portrait of no living personage appears on a Roman medal; and even the plan of engraving on coins the names of great men and magistrates was only introduced about the year 80 B.C.

"In the earliest and more simple days of Rome," (says Akerman in his *Numismatic Manual*), "the portraits of no living personage appeared on the public money; the heads were those of their deities, or some personage who had received divine honours. Julius Cæsar was the first who obtained the express permission of the senate to place his portrait on the coins; and the example was soon followed by others. The heads of Lepidus, and of Antony, appear on their denarii, and even the money of Brutus with the two daggers and cap of liberty, bears on the obverse the head of the man who killed his friend because he had assumed the regal power and authority. We have no evidence, however, that this money, which is of great rarity, was struck with the knowledge and sanction of Brutus; and it is possible that it is a posthumous coin."

Medals are sometimes dug up singly, or in small numbers, where they seem to have been thrown by accident, or rather to have been buried; but the principal stores of ancient coins are found in tombs, or in places where fear, avarice, or superstition had deposited them for the sake of security.

SECTION II.

COINS AND MEDALS IN A CABINET—GREEK MEDALS—THEIR CHARACTERISTICS—CIVIC AND MONARCHICAL—GREEK IMPERIAL COINS—ROMAN MEDALS—CONSULAR AND IMPERIAL—COLONIAL COINS—COINS OF OTHER NATIONS—BRACTEATES. We must now take a cursory view of MEDALS, as ar-

ranged in the cabinet of the antiquary, noticing, as we proceed, the principles and rules which direct him in making such an arrangement.

GREEK MEDALS claim the first place in a cabinet, by reason of their antiquity and their workmanship. Coinage began, perhaps, about 1000 B.C.—for before that time, *weight* was the only principle of estimating money, as we learn from the Scriptures and other ancient writings. The following are the stages of the progress of coinage: 1. Coins, or mere pieces of metal without any impression. 2. Those which have a hollow indented mark or marks on one side, and an impression in relief on the other: this sort of coinage was used from about 900 to 700 B.C. 3. Such as have an indented square divided into segments, with a small figure in one of the segments, the rest being vacant; and impressions on the obverse as usual. This sort of coinage lasted till about 600 B.C. 4. Those which are struck hollow on the reverse, while the obverse is in relief, usually with the same figure; which coins are perhaps coeval with those of the last class. 5. Coins in which a square dye is used, either on one or both sides: these lasted till about 420 B.C. 6. Complete coins, both as to obverse and reverse: such occur in Sicily, where the art was carried to great perfection as early as 490 B.C.

The best informed antiquaries consider that the most ancient coins, as well of Greece as of other countries, are distinguishable by the following marks:—1. They have a sort of oval, swelling circumference:—2. Their letters are of an antique character:—3. Part of the legend is in the common style, while the next is retrograde:—4. They have the indented square:—5. The process of their coinage is of a simple character:—6. Many of them are hollowed on the reverse, and have the image impressed on the front:—7. The dress, symbols, &c., are often of the rudest design and execution. Among other coins which bear marks of great antiquity, are some Persian pieces, with the archer upon one side, and the hollow square upon the other. At one time, indeed, many of the coins and medals of Athens were square; and all over Asia and Africa there once circulated not only square, but octagon money. A kind of square money of red copper, was used in France, in the time of the Emperor Honorius, A.D. 420. Though the Athenians possessed mines of copper, yet they were so unwilling to employ this metal as specie, that they preferred gratifying their taste or vanity by cutting silver into such small pieces, that they were sometimes mistaken for scales of fishes. Gold was also very scarce at this time, when a copper coinage had not yet been adopted.

In the course of time, the Greeks acquired great elegance; evincing strength, beauty, and relief in their impressions. The modern medallist distinguishes the early Greek medals into *civic* and *monarchical*; or *cities* and *kings*: those of cities being generally the most ancient. The civic medals are usually stamped on the obverse, with the head of the genius of the city, or of some favourite deity; while



COIN OF AMPHIPOLIS IN THRACE, WITH THE HEAD OF APOLLO.

the reverse often presents some symbol used by the city, at the time when the piece was struck. The legend contains the initials, monogram, or whole characters of the name of the city. The civic coins interest by their variety, and are particularly useful in elucidating ancient geography. They present us with a view of the customs, laws, and religion of ancient cities; and likewise shew the wealth and power of each city and country.

"In the types of some of the earliest Greek coins, we find a spirit and boldness both in design and execution, with which many of the more elaborate productions of modern times will not bear comparison. The rude and often misshapen lump of silver, upon which these types are impressed, contrasts most singularly with the wonderful freedom and spirit of the design. Armour, weapons, animals, plants, utensils, and the most graceful representations of the human figure appear in infinite and astonishing variety within a

space so circumscribed, that the artists of antiquity would seem to have sometimes vied with each other in the production of the most striking representation within the smallest possible limits."—AKERMAN.

The monarchical coins of Greece are often of the same construction with the civic; only that they bear the name of the prince on the reverse. They usually have the bust of some deity in front; and seldom the image of the prince. These coins chiefly interest by their portraits, and are important in clearing up ancient History. The most ancient series is that of Macedon, commencing about 500 B.C. By the time Philip II. became king, the Macedonian coins began to be beautiful: those of Alexander the Great, about 350 B.C., are wonderful; for in his time the art seems to have attained its highest perfection. It is to the Greek coins that were struck before the cities and sovereignties of the Greeks were included in the Roman empire, that the highest praise of the best judges has been awarded.



ANTIOCHUS V.



ANTIOCHUS VII.

The Grecian imperial coins are those which were struck when Greece formed part of the Roman empire: but it is usual to consider those Greek coins of cities, which have the head of an emperor or empress, as imperial Greek coins: while those which have no such impressions, are classed with Grecian civic coins, though struck under the Roman power. Of imperial Greek coins none occur in gold: but there are in silver, those of Antioch, Tyre, Sidon, and other trading cities in the then opulent and commercial cities of Western Asia: of this sort are the coins of Ephesus, many of which bear a representation of the celebrated temple of Diana, referred to in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.



COINS OF EPHEBUS.

The Greek imperial brass coins are very abundant. Those of Antioch, which commonly have a Latin legend on the obverse, and Greek on the reverse, are so numerous as to furnish a series of almost all the emperors; being apparently struck for the purpose of paying the Roman forces in the East.

We shall not attempt to specify the precise values of coins, whether Greek or Roman; first, because it would be somewhat tedious and uninteresting; and secondly, because such values, in English money, are even now open to dispute. We must, therefore, content ourselves with observing, that as *weight* originally served for the principle of estimating money; still, in settling very large sums weight continued to be taken as the standard, long after coined money came to be used. Hence the *Mina* and *Talentum*, the former containing 100 silver Attic drachms; and the latter 60 mine. The mina and talent were therefore estimated by weight: but of the *coined* money, there were three chief sorts;—the obolus (brass) worth nearly 1½d. English; the drachm (silver) 9d.; and the Philip (gold) nearly 17s.

The term "Philip" became in the course of time a general

name of gold money in Greece, for many years after Philip, King of Macedon, in whose reign such gold pieces were coined. But the values of the obolus, the drachm, and the Philip, were various in different states of Greece; and there were likewise many multiples and divisions of the same.

ROMAN MEDALS claim the next place in the cabinet of the antiquary. The first Roman coins were large pieces of brass rudely impressed, and only on one side, with the figure of an ox, a ram, or some other animal; whence money was termed *pecunia*, from the Latin word *pecus*, cattle. In process of time this impression was changed to that of a bust of Janus upon the front, and the prow of a ship upon the reverse; and for more general use, pieces of inferior weight and value were coined.

The grand distinction which marks the Roman coins, considered as medals in a cabinet, lies between the *Consular* and *Imperial*. The Roman consular coins seldom or never bore the names or titles of consuls till towards the close of that sort of government; but they are nevertheless properly called *consular*, because they were struck in the consular times of Rome. Those of the later *as* are also often called *coins of families*, from the circumstance that the names of many of the principal families of Rome were placed upon the fields of the coins,—and they are always arranged alphabetically in families, according to the names which appear on them. The *brass* consular coins are not very interesting; as they consist chiefly of large unwieldy pieces, with types of insipid similarity. Few of them have any imagery or symbol. Such large pieces are generally kept in boxes apart, by those who are well acquainted with them. We are told however, that the Romans at first coined in lead, and afterwards, in the reign of Numa, in copper, before using brass. Servius Tullius made the *as* of brass, B.C. 550. The *silver* coinage began at Rome about 266 B.C. The *denarius* was the first and last form which it assumed; for the other sizes are so scarce, that very few seem to have been struck. On the later consular medals is seen much of that fine personification afterwards displayed on the imperial coins. About 62 years after the coining of silver, *gold* began to be coined at Rome. Of the consular coins and medals in copper and brass, there may be nearly 500; about 3000 in silver; and about 100 in gold. Most of the gold consular coins are of great beauty and high value.

The Roman imperial coins claim our attention more particularly, owing to the extent of the Roman empire and our own connexion with it; interesting us therefore as much, or more than those of our own country. These coins are often distinguished into those of the upper and lower empire: the upper empire commenced with Julius Cæsar, and ended A.D. 260; the lower empire lasted from thence to the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, A.D. 1453. All the imperial medals up to this date are usually reckoned among the antique; and yet there are none of any considerable beauty later than the age of Heraclius, who died A.D. 641. After the time of Heraclius, Italy became a prey to the barbarians; so that the coins and medals which appeared up to his time, seem to finish the set or series of imperial medals. To these, however, are added the coins and medals of the Greek emperors who reigned at Constantinople, to a later date. The Gothic medals are likewise considered to make part of the imperial ones: they are so called, as having been struck in the times of the Goths, and in the declension of the empire, and savouring of the ignorance and barbarity of the age.

The imperial series of *brass* coins begins of course, with Julius Cæsar; but some elegance and variety were exhibited in this coinage fifty years before Cæsar's time. It is of three sizes; large, middle, and small. The *large* brass coins form a series of surprising beauty and vast expense. In this series the various colours of the *patina*, or oxidation, have the finest effect; and the great size of the portraits and figures conspires to render it the most important of all the Roman coinage: so that it even exceeds the gold in value, though the intrinsic value of each piece is only about twopence English. The series of the *middle* brass coins exceeds that of the large brass, but has not such elegance of work, or of types. Many coins are common in this series, which are rare in the other; and but very few examples occur to the contrary: hence this series is not so valuable as the first. There are, however, some rare and curious coins among them, particularly such as relate to the ancient history of this island, among which are some that personify the country *Britannia*, in a manner similar to what we have it on the copper coins of the present day. The *small* brass series has

many curious coins, and particularly of the usurpers in the latter days of the Roman empire.



ROMAN COINS.

The brass coins are distinguished by the letters S.C. *Senatus Consulto*,—by a Decree of the Senate; because the senate alone had the power of striking brass, while the emperor himself had that of gold and silver. If, therefore, the S.C. be found wanting on any brass coin, it is supposed that such coin was once plated for the purpose of forgery. The large brass coins are of the size of our crown-pieces; the middle brass are of the size of our half-crowns; and the small brass coins are not bigger than our shillings, and are also smaller. The small brass series extends from the beginning to the close of the Roman Empire, or to about 670 A.D.

The *silver* imperial coins are very numerous and various. This series is as complete as any, and of far cheaper purchase, as very few of the emperors are scarce in silver. Most types of even the large brass and the gold are found in the silver, which thus unites the advantages of all the metals. Sometimes the silver and gold coins, as being of one size, are struck from the same dye. But the imperial *gold* forms a series of wonderful beauty and perfection, attainable only by men of princely fortunes. In these the workmanship is carried to the greatest height; and the richness of the metal is surpassed by that of the types. As gold does not suffer from rust, the coins are for the most part in the same state as they came from the mint. Mr. Pinkerton infers that the number of Roman gold imperial coins may amount to 5000; the silver to 10,000; and the brass to 30,000; and that all the ancient coins together may reach to the number of 30,000; but this calculation, he says, cannot be very accurate.

We come now to the *COLONIAL* coins of Rome, As Roman colonies were settled in various parts of the empire, their coins have sometimes Greek, and sometimes even Punic legends; though generally, the legend on one side of such coins is Latin: but those with Latin legends only are



ANTIOCH IN SYRIA.

far more numerous. The colonial coins are only in brass: some of them are elegant; though most of them are rude and uninteresting. They begin with Julius Cæsar and Anthony. The only British Roman colony which had its own coins, was that of Camalodunum, supposed to be Maldon or Colchester, in Essex. This species of coin is one of Claudius, about A.D. 50; on the reverse is a team of oxen, with COL. CAMALODON. AUG.

On the reverses of Roman colonial coins, easily distinguished by their rude fabric, and the name of the colony on them, commonly beginning with COL. where an ensign stands alone, and without any persons, it shows a colony drawn from one legion; but when the ensigns or banners stand together, they evince the colony to have been drawn from as many legions as there are ensigns.

The subjoined is a representation of a coin belonging to Gadara, one of the towns of the Decapolis, of which we read in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark. The Decapolis was eastward of the Lake of Tiberias, and Gadara was the chief city of the Roman province of Perea. The inhabitants, being



COIN OF GADARA

remote parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, at that time known.

The Romans, at the commencement of their civil polity, reckoned money by *weight*, as we observed before. Their chief coined money was the *as* in brass, the *denarius* in silver, and the *aureus* in gold. The *as* was worth rather more than three farthings of our money, the *denarius* almost 8d., and the *aureus* rather more than 20s.

"It has been well observed that the military genius of the Romans is never more apparent than in their medals: in the warlike emblems which are constantly to be found upon them: in the frequent representations of harangues to their soldiers: and of rewards for military services. We are convinced by the same means of their extravagant superstition, from the frequent proofs of the deification of their emperors, consuls, and magistrates, of the superb temples which were erected to their honour, and the sacrifices which were regularly paid to their memory."—HALL.

We pass on now to make a few brief observations on the coins and medals of other nations, usually termed *barbarian*, premising that, by *ancient* coins, all before the ninth century, or age of Charlemagne, are meant; all after that period being deemed *modern*. No coins are found of Babylonian or Assyrian kings; the oldest found in those parts being Persian, and similar to the Greek. The Greeks seem to have preceded the Phœnicians in coining money, as the oldest Phœnician coins are not above 400 B.C. The great trading cities of Tyre and Sidon weighed their money; and coinage was long unknown in Egypt; for the thin, broad pieces of gold found in the mouths of mummies, and put there for the purpose of paying the passage of the souls into the infernal regions, have no mark upon them. India and China have no early coinage. The Lydian coins, therefore, seem to be the most ancient in Asia.



PERSIAN COIN.

Next to these are the Persian, well known by the ram, under which figure that state is alluded to in Scripture, in the book of Daniel; as also by the archer. None of these coins can be older than 570 B.C., when the Persian empire began. The famous Darics were issued by Darius Hystaspes, who began to reign 521 B.C. They occur both in gold and silver, and bear some resemblance to the coins of Ægina, before mentioned. The Darics, from their extreme scarcity, are supposed to have

rich, sent ambassadors to Vespasian, when he advanced against Judæa, and gave up this strong city to him. The ship, which occurs so frequently upon ancient coins, is indicative of commerce; as appears likewise on the Phœnician coin at p. 88.

The Roman coins have been most extensively spread: some of them have been found in the Orkney Islands; and they have likewise been discovered in great numbers in the most

been melted down by Alexander the Great for his own coinage, when he conquered Persia. The gold Darics were worth rather more than the English guinea, and were preferred throughout the East for the fineness of their gold.

There is a second series of the Persian coins; that of the Sassanide, which begins about A.D. 220, when Artaxerxes overturned the Parthian monarchy. The Parthian coins have all Greek legends, but the later Persian bear only Persian characters: they are large and thin; with the king's bust on one side, and the altar of Mithras on the other, generally with a human figure on each side. The



PERSIAN COIN.

letters on Persian coins seem to partake of the ancient Greek, Gothic, and Alanic. The later Persian coins extend to the year A.D. 636, when Persia was conquered by the Arabian caliphs.

The Hebrew shekels are of silver. They were originally didrachms (1s. 3d.); but after the time of the Maccabees, about B.C. 140, when the Hebrew nation first struck money for itself, they were coined of the value of the Greek tetradrachm, (2s. 6d.) The brass coins with the Samaritan characters, are many of them earlier than the Christian era, but



JEWISH SHEKEL

were not current until after the return from the Babylonish Captivity, B.C. 536. Most of the Jewish coins have the sprig on one side, and the vase on the other, as on the shekel; the sprig bearing reference to Aaron's rod that budded, and the vase to the censer of incense.

The coins of the heathens were usually stamped with the symbols of their idolatrous worship, to use which was a source of continual affliction to the Jews. In the time of Simon they were released from this grievance; and we find that on their own national coins, there is no representation of man or other creature upon it;—no portrait of any person, prince, or deity. In the annexed coin the ears of wheat are emblematic of the fertility of Canaan, and the tent refers to the Feast of Tabernacles.



THE GOLD DARIC.

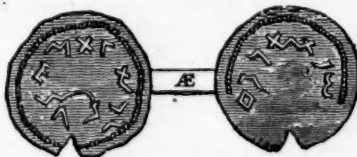


PERSIAN COINS.



JEWISH COIN.

There is also a curious old medal, which attests the truth of History, by referring to certain privileges which the Jews received from the Syrian monarch in the time of Simon,



OLD JEWISH MEDAL.

140 B.C. On the front, in the old Samaritan character, is "the fourth year," and on the reverse—"from the deliverance of Jerusalem."

The Phœnician coins, which begin to appear about 400 B.C., and of which we give one referring by the legend to the Sidonian goddess, Astarte, as also the Carthaginian, are rendered interesting by the ancient civilization and great power of those nations: their alphabets are nearly allied to the Syriac, Chaldaic, and Hebrew. Coins of Palmyra, the "Tadmor in the wilderness"—or "City of the Palms," have likewise been found with a similar mixed alphabet. The Tuscan coins are inscribed with a character connected with the old Greek and Latin. The ancient Spanish coins have a character belonging to old Greek, or Punic: they are ancient, and not all struck by the Punic colonies; for the legends are in different characters. The ancient coins of Gaul are also numerous, and many of them in base gold; but, unhappily, the most ancient have no legends at all.

It seems that our ancient British ancestors used brass, apparently coined, as a superior metal, as more advanced nations used gold; and also iron rings for money, examined and reduced to a certain weight. Rude coins of copper, much mingled with tin, are frequently found in England, and are perhaps the copper coins used by our forefathers in the days of old. We have many coins of Cunobeline who was king of the Trinobantes, and was educated at Rome, at the court of Augustus. These coins of Cunobeline are the only ones apparently ancient British. Most of them have



PHœNICIAN COIN.



Cunobeline—Silver.

Cunobeline—Gold.

at least, CVNO on one side, with an ear of wheat, a horse, a kind of head of Janus, or some such symbol; and oftentimes CAMV, thought to be the initials of Camulodanum, the chief city of his kingdom, on the other side, with a boar and tree, and a variety of other badges.

It seems that, after the arrival of the Romans in this island, the Britons imitated them, coining both gold and silver, with the images of their kings stamped on them; but when the Romans had subdued the kings of the Britons, they also suppressed their coins, and brought in their own, which were current here from the time of Claudius to that of Valentinian the Younger, about 400 A.D. There are some coins of Antoninus Pius, about A.D. 150, the reverses of which present, as we before observed, almost the same type as that which we have on our present copper coinage.

All the kings of France down to Charlemagne range in this division. Liuva I., who began his reign A.D. 567, and the other kings of the Western Goths in Spain, appear upon their coins, encircled with Roman characters. Other Gothic kings, who reigned in Italy and other countries, after the

fall of the Roman empire in the West, likewise use the Roman language in their coinage. They most commonly occur in the size of medals, termed *small brass*. Many coins also occur with legends, which though meant for Latin characters, and in imitation of Latin coins, are so perverted as to be illegible: such are, in general, termed *barbarous medals*.

After the dissolution of the Roman empire, a species of coins termed *bracteates*, was circulated in the newly formed European states. These were, as the name implies, *plated* coins, and belong properly to the middle ages, or what we have termed in this essay, the commencement of modern numismatics.

Before quitting the subject of ancient *medals*, we must notice some of a remarkable character, which have been introduced into this paper. One of these was struck by the Senate in honour of Hadrian, the Roman emperor, about 130 A.D., in commemoration of the great benefits, which he had conferred on the empire. This medal is given at p. 86, and has for its legend—"To the Restorer of the world."

Constantine the Great was the first Roman Emperor who received the rite of baptism. This was performed for him just before his death, which took place, A.D. 337. One of the coins struck upon this occasion, is given below: it represents on the obverse the emperor in his robes, crowned with a wreath of laurel, with the legend, "The Emperor Constantine, Pious, Happy, August." On the reverse is a full length figure of him, cloaked, holding in his right hand a globe, and in his left a rod or wand, with the legend, "To Constantine, the Pious, August, born in Baptism." The letters in the exergue are said to imply that the medal was coined at London; but this is objected to.



MEDAL TO COMMEMORATE THE BAPTISM OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.

Another medal struck in honour of Hadrian is given at the conclusion of this paper. Under this emperor, a rebellion against the Roman authority broke out in Judæa, headed by the famous impostor, Barchochab (Son of the Star), who set himself up for the Messiah. This war lasted three years and a half. The Jews were completely subdued, and forbidden to even enter the City of Jerusalem. They purchased with money the liberty, not of entering the holy city, but only of looking at a distance on it, and going to mourn its fall and desolation. On the reverse of this medal is represented *Judæa*, kneeling in submission to the emperor, and three children imploring mercy of him.

In another Supplement, we shall enter upon *MODERN* Coins and Medals, and continue the subject down to the present time.



MEDAL OF HADRIAN, COMMEMORATING HIS VICTORY OVER THE JEWS.